

# BusinessWeek

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## Steve Jobs' Greatest Presentation

Our communications coach mines Jobs' introduction of the iPhone to offer five lessons for making an unforgettable pitch

by [Carmine Gallo](#)

After a gorgeous afternoon of golf a few days ago, my nephew seemed anxious to get home, even skipping out on my invitation to dinner. He's a graduating high school senior, so I assumed he wanted to hang out with friends. I was partly correct. He wanted to hang out with friends in line for the new iPhone.

Leave it to Apple ([AAPL](#)) Chief Executive [Steve Jobs](#) to create a frenzy that gripped every gadget fan in the country. The hype, however, started with what I consider Jobs' best presentation to date—the introduction of the iPhone at the annual Macworld trade show in January.

After watching and analyzing the presentation, I thought about five ways to distill Jobs' speaking techniques to help anyone craft and deliver a persuasive pitch.

### 1. BUILD TENSION

A good novelist doesn't lay out the entire plot and conclusion on the first page of the book. He builds up to it. Jobs begins his presentation by reviewing the "revolutionary" products Apple has introduced. According to Jobs, "every once in a while a revolutionary product comes along that changes everything...Apple has been fortunate to introduce a few things into the world." Jobs continues by describing the 1984 launch of the Macintosh as an event that "changed the entire computer industry." The same goes for the introduction of the first iPod in 2001, a product that he says "changed the entire music industry."

After laying the groundwork, Jobs builds up to the new device by teasing the audience: "Today, we are introducing three revolutionary products. The first is a wide-screen iPod with touch controls. The second is a revolutionary new mobile phone. And the third is a breakthrough Internet communications device." Jobs continues to build tension. He repeats the three devices several times then says, "Are you getting it? These are not three separate devices. This is one device...today Apple is going to reinvent the phone!" The crowd goes wild.

Jobs conducts a presentation like a symphony, with ebbs and flows, buildups and climaxes. It leaves his listeners wildly excited. The takeaway? Build up to something unexpected in your presentations.

### 2. STICK TO ONE THEME PER SLIDE

A brilliant designer once told me that effective presentation slides only have one message per slide. One slide, one key point. When Jobs introduced the "three revolutionary products" in the description above, he didn't show one slide with three devices. When he spoke about each feature (a widescreen iPod, a mobile phone, and an Internet communicator), a slide would appear with an image of each feature.

Jobs also makes the slides highly visual. At no place in his presentation does the audience see slides with bullet

points or mind-numbing data. An image is all he needs. The simplicity of the slides keeps the audience's attention on the speaker, where it should be. Images are memorable, and more important, can complement the speaker. Too much text on a slide distracts from the speaker's words. Prepare slides that are visually stimulating and focused on one key point.

### 3. ADD PIZZAZZ TO YOUR DELIVERY

Jobs modulates his vocal delivery to build up the excitement. When he opens his presentation by describing the revolutionary products Apple created in the past, his volume is low and he speaks slowly, almost in a reverential tone. His volume continues to build until his line, "Today Apple is going to reinvent the phone." Be an electrifying speaker by varying the speed at which you speak and by raising and lowering your voice at the appropriate times.

### 4. PRACTICE

Jobs makes presentations look effortless because he takes nothing for granted. Jobs is known to rehearse demonstrations for hours prior to launch events. I can name many high-profile chief executives who decide to wing it. It shows. It always amazes me that many business leaders spend tens of thousands of dollars on designing presentations, but next to no time actually rehearsing. I usually get the call after the speaker bombs. Don't lose your audience. Rehearse a presentation out loud until you've nailed it.

### 5. BE HONEST AND SHOW ENTHUSIASM

If you believe that your particular product or service will change the world, then say so. Have fun with the content. During the iPhone launch, Jobs uses many adjectives to describe the new product, including "remarkable," "revolutionary," and "cool." He jokes that the touch-screen features of the phone "work like magic...and boy have we patented it."

I think speakers are so afraid of over-hyping a product that they go to the opposite extreme and make their presentations boring. If you're passionate about a product, service, or company, let your listeners know. Give yourself permission to loosen up, have fun, and express your enthusiasm!

Now please don't say, "This sounds great, Carmine, but I'm not as charismatic as Steve Jobs." Well guess what—Jobs worked at it and is far more engaging today as a presenter than he was many years ago. We all have room to grow and to improve the way we pitch ourselves and our products. Good luck!

[Carmine Gallo](#) is a Pleasanton, Calif. communications coach and author of the book, *Fire Them Up!* (John Wiley & Sons; October, 2007).

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# BusinessWeek

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## Deliver a Presentation like Steve Jobs

Our communications coach breaks down the ace presenter's latest Macworld keynote. The result? A 10-part framework you can use to wow your own audience

by [Carmine Gallo](#)

When Apple ([AAPL](#)) CEO [Steve Jobs](#) kicked off this year's Macworld Conference & Expo, he once again raised the bar on presentation skills. While most presenters simply convey information, Jobs also inspires. He sells the steak and the sizzle at the same time, as one reader commented a few years ago.

I analyzed his latest presentation and extracted the 10 elements that you can combine to dazzle your own audience. Bear in mind that Jobs has been refining his skills for years. I broke down his 2007 Macworld keynote in a [previous column](#) (BusinessWeek.com, 7/6/07) and in a [chapter](#) in my latest book. Still, how he actually arrives at what appear to be effortless presentations bears expanding on and explaining again.

**1. Set the theme.** "There is something in the air today." With those words, Jobs opened Macworld. By doing so, he set the theme for [his presentation](#) (BusinessWeek.com, 1/15/08) and hinted at the key product announcement—the ultrathin MacBook Air laptop. Every presentation needs a theme, but you don't have to deliver it at the start. Last year, Jobs delivered the theme about 20 minutes into his presentation: "Today Apple reinvents the phone." Once you identify your theme, make sure you deliver it several times throughout your presentation.

**2. Demonstrate enthusiasm.** Jobs shows his passion for computer design. During his presentation he used words like "extraordinary," "amazing," and "cool." When demonstrating a new location feature for the iPhone, Jobs said, "It works pretty doggone well." Most speakers have room to add some flair to their presentations. Remember, your audience wants to be wowed, not put to sleep. Next time you're crafting or delivering a presentation, think about injecting your own personality into it. If you think a particular feature of your product is "awesome," say it. Most speakers get into presentation mode and feel as though they have to strip the talk of any fun. If you are not enthusiastic about your own products or services, how do you expect your audience to be?

**3. Provide an outline.** Jobs outlined the presentation by saying, "There are four things I want to talk about today. So let's get started..." Jobs followed his outline by verbally opening and closing each of the four sections and making clear transitions in between. For example, after revealing several new iPhone features, he said, "The iPhone is not standing still. We keep making it better and better and better. That was the second thing I wanted to talk about today. No. 3 is about iTunes." Make lists and provide your audience with guideposts along the way.

**4. Make numbers meaningful.** When Jobs announced that Apple had sold 4 million iPhones to date, he didn't simply leave the number out of context. Instead, he put it in perspective by adding, "That's 20,000 iPhones every day, on average." Jobs went on to say, "What does that mean to the overall market?" Jobs detailed the breakdown of the U.S. smartphone market and Apple's share of it to demonstrate just how impressive the number actually is. Jobs also pointed out that Apple's market share equals the share of its top three competitors combined. Numbers don't mean much unless they are placed in context. Connect the dots for your listeners.

**5. Try for an unforgettable moment.** This is the moment in your presentation that everyone will be talking about. Every Steve Jobs presentation builds up to one big scene. In this year's Macworld keynote, it was the announcement of MacBook Air. To demonstrate just how thin it is, Jobs said it would fit in an envelope. Jobs drew cheers by opening a manila interoffice envelope and holding the laptop for everyone to see. What is the one memorable moment of your presentation? Identify it ahead of time and build up to it.

**6. Create visual slides.** While most speakers fill their slides with data, text, and charts, Jobs does the opposite. There is very little text on a Steve Jobs slide. Most of the slides simply show one image. For example, his phrase "The first thing I want to talk to you about today..." was accompanied by a slide with the numeral 1. That's it. Just the number. When Jobs discussed a specific product like the iPhone, the audience saw a slide with an image of the product. When text was introduced, it was often revealed as short sentences (three or four words) to the right of the image. Sometimes, there were no images at all on the slide but a sentence that Jobs had delivered such as "There is something in the air." There is a trend in public speaking to paint a picture for audiences by creating more visual graphics. Inspiring presenters are short on bullet points and big on graphics.

**7. Give 'em a show.** A Jobs presentation has ebbs and flows, themes and transitions. Since he's giving his audience a show instead of simply delivering information, Jobs includes video clips, demonstrations, and guests he shares the stage with. In his latest keynote, the audience heard from Jim Gianopulos, CEO and chairman of [Fox Filmed Entertainment](#), and [Paul Otellini](#), CEO of Intel ([INTC](#)). Enhance your presentations by incorporating multimedia, product demonstrations, or giving others the chance to say a few words.

**8. Don't sweat the small stuff.** Despite your best preparation, something might go wrong as it did during the keynote. Jobs was about to show some photographs from a live Web site, and the screen went black while Jobs waited for the image to appear. It never did. Jobs smiled and said, "Well, I guess Flickr isn't serving up the photos today." He then recapped the new features he had just introduced. That's it. It was no big deal. I have seen presenters get flustered over minor glitches. Don't sweat minor mishaps. Have fun. Few will remember a glitch unless you call attention to it.

**9. Sell the benefit.** While most presenters promote product features, Jobs sells benefits. When introducing iTunes movie rentals, Jobs said, "We think there is a better way to deliver movie content to our customers." Jobs explained the benefit by saying, "We've never offered a rental model in music because people want to own their music. You listen to your favorite song thousands of times in your life. But most of us watch movies once, maybe a few times. And renting is a great way to do it. It's less expensive, doesn't take up space on our hard drive..." Your listeners are always asking themselves, "What's in it for me?" Answer the question. Don't make them guess. Clearly state the benefit of every service, feature, or product.

**10. Rehearse, rehearse, rehearse.** Steve Jobs cannot pull off an intricate presentation with video clips, demonstrations, and outside speakers without hours of rehearsal. I have spoken to people within Apple who tell me that Jobs rehearses the entire presentation aloud for many hours. Nothing is taken for granted. You can see he rehearsed the Macworld presentation because his words were often perfectly synchronized with the images and text on the slides. When Jobs was showing examples of the films that are available on the new iTunes movie rental service, one poster of a particular film appeared at the exact moment he began to talk about it. The entire presentation was coordinated. A Steve Jobs presentation looks effortless because it is well-rehearsed.

Try to use all of the techniques I describe above in your next presentation. Then let me know how it goes. You can e-mail me at [carmine@gallogcommunications.com](mailto:carmine@gallogcommunications.com) with your feedback or post a comment below.

*[Carmine Gallo](#) is a Pleasanton, Calif. communications coach and author of the book, *Fire Them Up!* (John Wiley & Sons; October,*